

Tips for sharing the road

Sharing the road is about being courteous to all road users, whether they are in cars or buses, on bicycles or on foot. Here are some tips and hints that will help you shift to a nicer gear and share the road.

Motorists

- Stay out of crosswalks when waiting at intersections - stopping in crosswalks forces pedestrians into traffic.
- Yield to pedestrians at crossings.
- Look for pedestrians when turning, especially on one-way streets. While vehicles may travel in only one direction, pedestrians cross both ways.
- Watch for pedestrians on roads that don't have sidewalks. They should be walking on the shoulder facing oncoming traffic.
- Watch for pedestrians when pulling into and backing out of driveways, parking lots or any time you have to drive across a sidewalk.
- Be especially careful in school zones or areas where children might be walking.
- Treat bicycles as you would any other vehicle on the road since they are legally defined as vehicles under the Highway Traffic Act. Cyclists generally ride in the right-most through lane, about one metre from the curb or parked cars.
- Check for bikes in your side view mirror before opening your car doors.
- Do not beep your horn at cyclists unless they are in imminent danger.
- Motorists are prohibited from driving or parking in all bicycle lanes.
- When passing a cyclist, leave a safe distance between your car and the bicycle. Give extra passing distance during slippery road-conditions.
- People riding bikes may be startled by fast-approaching vehicles on quiet roads; pass at a moderate speed and provide plenty of space.
- Larger vehicles should be cautious of blasting a cyclist with winds when passing, especially on dusty roads.
- Slow down or avoid puddles when passing cyclists or pedestrians.
- Don't drive in bus-only lanes, even when the regular traffic lanes are congested.
- Always check your left and right blind spots before pulling out of parking spots or making right hand turns.
- Don't tailgate. Always keep your distance - leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Drive cooperatively and maintain a safe speed.
- Signal when changing lanes.

Pedestrians

Remember to **“Walk like your life depends on it!”** In 2008, one-third of Ottawa’s traffic fatalities involved a pedestrian. In over half of those cases, the pedestrian was at fault. Between 2004 and 2008, pedestrian-related injuries and deaths were recorded as follows:

- 1,487 injuries
- 181 life-altering injuries
- 32 deaths

See a list of measures the City of Ottawa has taken to make streets [safe for pedestrians](#), or follow these tips.

As a pedestrian:

- Cross at marked crosswalks or traffic lights, not in the middle of the block or between parked cars.
- Remove headphones; put away cell phones or other electronic devices when crossing the street. Use your full attention so you’ll be able to see, hear and respond safely to what is happening on the roadway.

- Make sure drivers see you before you cross.
- Cross when traffic has come to a complete stop.
- At a traffic light, cross at the beginning of a green light. Do not cross once the “Don’t Walk” signal begins to flash or once the light has turned yellow. Never cross on a red light.
- Watch for traffic turning at intersections or entering and leaving driveways.
- Wear bright or light-coloured clothing or reflective strips when walking in dusk or darkness.

As a parent or caregiver

- Teach and reinforce the proper techniques for crossing the road safely with your child.
- Stress the importance of walking on the sidewalk, or where there are no sidewalks, of walking facing traffic as far away as possible from the travelled portion of the road.
- When waiting to cross the street, stop before the edge of the sidewalk.

Cyclists

- Shoulder check and signal all lane changes, turns and stops.
- Equip yourself properly; the law requires that all bicycles have a bell or horn.
- Stay off of sidewalks and yield to pedestrians at crossings.
- Be bright at night! Use a headlight, taillight, reflectors and light-coloured or retro-reflective clothing so drivers can see you.
- Recognize and be careful of the blind spots around cars, trucks and buses.
- Use caution when crossing intersections.
- Watch out for trucks with wide loads and/or long trailers as they have limited visibility as well as manoeuvring.